

- (3) there are other writings by the conscious "imitators" to make variability estimates for whatever dependent variables are ultimately used in this study.

It would be marvelous to discover writings that were produced by the "channel" in his "normal" waking state but even without them, we are presented with a unique historical opportunity for exploring channeling phenomena from a new and exciting perspective. While it is unlikely that such a study will provide us with ironclad proof that the deceased Dickens was the real author of the channeled version of the novel, there is far more to be gained by this study. Whatever the results show, it is certain that this study will pioneer a new methodology which may prove useful for contemporary studies of channeling and, perhaps, for scholars and scientists in other fields as well.

#### HEALING THROUGH SPIRITS: AN EXPERIENTIAL ACCOUNT OF DISOBSESSION IN THE BRAZILIAN SPIRITIST TRADITION

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Central to the spiritist tradition of Brazil is the idea that many physical and mental disorders are the result of the intervention of a spirit entity or entities no longer focused in the physical plane. The person who is negatively affected by this fixation on him or her is said to be "obsessed" by the offending spirits and the recommended treatment is "disobsession" therapy.

The basic set-up for a disobsession proceeding is to convene several mediums, one or two directors, cleaners, and other assistants. The patients need not be present. A guiding spirit is often consulted through one of the mediums to determine the protocol and order of treatment. The name of the patient and other vital information is read, and the director invites any spirit associated with the patient to incorporate into one of the mediums.

Once the director establishes verbal contact with the spirit, the process of "orientation" or "indoctrination" begins, wherein the director, with the possible assistance of "guiding spirits" who incorporate into other mediums, gets it to recognize its discarnate state, release the patient, and take its "proper place in progression." A single disobsession case usually spans several sessions.

I was serving as a translator last winter for Edson Queiroz, a well-known spiritist healer who had come to the U.S. to teach mediumship and spiritist healing techniques. One evening, he

asked me if I would serve as an "intermediary," which I agreed to do. He had been to a counseling session for cancer patients that day and had noticed with his clairvoyant vision that there was a vampiric, skeletal entity obsessing one of the patients with a large, cancerous face tumor.

He proposed that I would act as a medium for this entity. The patient was not present at this session. After I released my fear and my usual awareness stepped into the background, I became aware of a terrible hunger and heard myself wailing pitifully. Eventually, under the guidance of a director, the spirit's story came out in a creaky, whiny voice definitely not my own. It seems that she had left her daughter (the same spirit as the patient) in a hut during a severe storm which had cut off her village from food supplies. She went looking for food but came back to find her daughter dead of exposure and hunger and vowed never to leave her again--hence the obsession. She responded to the director's instructions and allowed herself to be led into the light.

The next day, everyone noted an improvement in the demeanor and appearance of the patient. A psychodrama session built around the spirit's story was pursued with some intensity by the patient and a great emotional catharsis resulted. This was a case, in spiritist terms, of using the physical (the medium's body--mine) to heal the spiritual (the obsessing spirit) which, in turn, heals the physical (the patient's body and psyche).

#### EARLY FINDINGS ON THE NATURE OF CHANNELED DISCOURSE

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In our preliminary investigations into about eight Bay Area channels (or mediums), we find the following modes of communication active to a greater or lesser degree in each individual, such that the proposed structure accounts for most phenomena observed to date in all individuals. The first three modes are seen as pattern interruptions in the normal speaker/listener model.

(1) Activation of Trance-Talk Mode: Most channeled information is couched in what can only be called trance-talk, its object being motivation (looking at old information from a new perspective) rather than new information. Many phenomena of the powerful speaking called clairparance (such as power metaphors, repetition, etc.) are present in channeled discourse. A question to be asked here is: How effective and coherent is the stream of trance-talk coming from the channel?